

community through nearly three decades of unprecedented growth and prosperity.

Tom's keen legal mind aided city leaders and officials in their effort to make Murfreesboro, my hometown, one of America's most desirable places to live. Tom's influence has reached much farther than the legal interests of his city, though.

He has also been instrumental in bolstering the city's economic health and development. And he has been actively involved in many local, state and national committees, boards and professional associations.

His unflinching dedication and tireless service to the city will be sorely missed. I congratulate Tom on his outstanding career and with him well in his future endeavors.

VERMONT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT CONGRESSIONAL TOWN MEETING

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 24, 2001

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the outstanding work done by participants in my Student Congressional Town Meeting held this summer. These participants were part of a group of high school students from around Vermont who testified about the concerns they have as teenagers, and about what they would like to see government do regarding these concerns.

ON BEHALF OF HILLARY KNAPP AND CHRISTINE HARVEY—REGARDING HEALTHY CHOICES DURING THE TEENS YEARS, MAY 7, 2001

Hillary Knapp. In January, Otter Teen Network helped organize and run a peer leadership project, with the help of Green Mountain Prevention Project.

Christine Harvey. Otter Teen is a student-initiated and run organization that invites teens to work together to create a safe environment and positive school community at Otter Valley. And OTM encourages young students to develop leadership skills, have fun, and be high on life, not alcohol, tobacco or other dangerous drugs. One of OTM's goals is to empower individuals to respect themselves and others, and not give in to negative peer pressure. There are no membership requirements. All student and faculty are already members. As a member, you can become involved as much or as little as you desire.

Hillary Knapp. Peer Leadership Project is where certain kids from the school go and have leadership training for one weekend. And Green Mountain Prevention projects provided a facilitator, Workshop-presenter and team-building games. Through the PLP, we generated interest among the middle school students to get involved with planning and carrying out of our Power of Choice Day.

Christine Harvey. Our Power of Choice Day was a day where we had workshops for students to go to instead of regular classes, and the workshops were on healthy choices and the power you have to make your own choices.

Hillary Knapp. Students came to our Power of Choice Day thinking that it was going to be really boring and they were just going to sit there. And as they went to the workshops and did all the Activities we had, they found that it was interesting and they liked the day. The preliminary results of the survey for the day showed that the vast ma-

jority of the students enjoyed the day and found it somewhat to be useful in their everyday life.

Christine Harvey. We have a packet on all the stuff that we did during the day, and some pictures.

ON BEHALF OF JOSH SMOLKIN—REGARDING
LEGALIZING CANNABIS, MAY 7, 2001

Josh Smolkin. My name is Joshua Smolkin. Thank you for letting me speak here. Cannabis legalization has been increasingly popular. This push is misunderstood by those who discredit and close their ears to the cause. This push has not come from people who merely wish to walk down the street and smoke a joint without getting apprehended. It comes from intelligent individuals who wish to make as much use of a significant resource as humanly possible. Cannabis is the only plant that has resilient enough growing habits, frugal value, and the versatility to provide all the basic necessities of life while helping to save our ecosystem and supply all the energy we would ever need. I feel it is in our best interest to legalize cannabis. Hemp is a form of the cannabis plant that does not contain enough tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the psychoactive chemical found in cannabis, to get an individual high. It would astonish me as to why we have been confronted with so many problems whenever there is an attempt to use it industrially. That is, it would astonish me if I did not know that it is because hemp poses a huge threat to the timber and oil companies, both of which exert huge influence within the United States. Hemp can be effectively made into all sorts of energy products that are practically sulfur-free and cleaner burning than currently used national resources such as crude oil, its by-products, and coal. It can be easily made into a biomass form of charcoal and gasoline. While when burnt, it will release carbon dioxide, while it is growing, it uses up CO₂, creating more of a balance. I am convinced cannabis is one of our prime allies in the fight against the greenhouse effect and pollution. This possibility is definitely not given enough credence. I guess it is a horrible thing to explore likely ways to save our ecosystem. The truth is, our oil supplies are not going to last that much longer. Why destroy our world for the hundred some-odd years it will take for our oil to be depleted, at which point we will just have to run to a savior such as hemp our of necessity? Pulped hemp is a prime candidate for paper production. The cannabis plant has four times as much paper-usable pulp per acre as trees do. Furthermore, it grows back in about four months. Hemp fibers are very long, and grow in the organically binding glue found in plant cells, allowing for environmentally safe chlorine-free bleaching. These fibers can be made into various household items and clothing, far superior to cotton in durability, insulation, UV protection, and is easy to mass-produce. Hemp produces fibers which are 15 feet long and is health-conducive to the soil, while cotton produces fibers 1 to 2 centimeters long and destroys the soil. All products made are biodegradable. In a composite form, it is twice as strong as wood, and can replace timber in most all its forms. Hemp seeds are highly nutritious, even more so than soy. They are roughly 25 percent protein, 30 percent carbohydrates, and contain a whole list of vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids, and contain rare lineolic that is good for the immune system. Hemp seed oil is good for lowering cholesterol levels and strengthening the cardiovascular system. Besides hemp, there are various strains of budding cannabis containing higher levels of THC. Even these are relatively harmless compared

to other substances which are legal. There has never been a death caused solely from marijuana. This was confirmed by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Meanwhile, alcohol and tobacco have a combined death rate of over 500,000 annually, give or take a few thousand. It is hard to count with that many deaths. Even caffeine and aspirin cause upward of a thousand deaths or more a year, individually. In 1972, commissioned by President Nixon, the National Committee on Marijuana and Drug Abuse concluded that "marijuana's relative potential for harm to the vast majority of individuals and its actual impact on society does not justify a social policy to seek out and punish those who use it." I think that the accepted belief is that Marijuana is on a similar level with alcohol. Of course, there are those who would say it is far worse, and others who say it is less harmful. The fact is, if an individual of legal age can go home and drink a few beers and watch TV, why can't a person go home after work, smoke some marijuana, and watch TV? Is just so happens that, during the cultural development of our country, some substances became more socially acceptable than others. I think the main position taken by anti-marijuana legalization advocates is that it is a gateway drug. This assumption, made by those who would see cannabis hung, is false. In 1999, the Institute of Medicine reported on the so-called "gateway theory." The report says that, "although marijuana use often precedes the use of harder drugs, there is not conclusive evidence that marijuana acts as a 'gateway' drug that actually causes people to make this progression." If marijuana is a gateway drug, then alcohol or tobacco or Tylenol PM would be a gateway drug. The medicinal uses of cannabis and hemp are only now being understood and applied, in spite of the fact that it has been used medicinally for thousands of years. The flowers of marijuana, smoked or eaten, are used to treat many ailments. Marijuana treats nausea for cancer and AIDS and patients going through chemotherapy. For glaucoma sufferers, marijuana relieves the pressure in their eyes. It is a great pain-reducer, effective against migraine headaches and postmenstrual cramps. In asthma patients, marijuana smoke dilates the bronchial passages, opening the airways. There are many more known and unknown uses for medical marijuana. No matter how much credit we give ourselves, money is the strongest factor behind a lot of our actions. Upwards of \$9 billion or more tax dollars was spent on antimarijuana in individual past years. It was estimated that \$11 billion in tax revenues could be collected, not to mention income from legal sellers, producers and distributors. If cannabis were legalized that would be over \$20 billion we could put towards education. It's clear we're not getting all we should out of our current money spent on this issue. Prohibition is a failure. Millions of Americans smoke marijuana despite laws outlawing its use. Law enforcement arrests a marijuana smoker every 54 seconds in America, at a tremendous cost to society. Over 10 million Americans have been arrested on marijuana charges since the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse issued its recommendations to Congress in 1972 to decriminalize the plant. Non-violent marijuana offenders often serve longer sentences than rapists or murderers, and there are currently 60,000 in jail. This means that peaceful middle-class people are thrown in cells with rapists and murderers. Civil forfeiture laws allow the police to seize the money and property of suspected marijuana offenders; charges need not even be filed. Vigorous enforcement of the laws forces hardened criminals to take over marijuana trafficking. This causes violence and